

Communist Action vs. Catholic Action

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IN the modern clash between materialism, more exactly the dialectic materialism of the Soviets and the Roman Catholic Church, there are moments of encouragement and discouragement from our point of view. Ross Hoffman in his admirable book, *The Restoration*, adequately depicts the situation.

The Catholic Church is more manifestly alive today than anything else in the Western world; it is the one thing not compromised in the debacle of our culture; it is the one thing capable of staying the Communist threat of destroying our civilization; it is the one thing Catholic enough to repair our broken world.

The Catholic mind is grappling with modern anarchy in every field and its only formidable opponent is atheist Marxism. Every day it grows plainer that the fate of Western man as a human and not as a mere animal being, depends on the outcome of that struggle. Once again, as so often in the past, the Church is warring upon madness and perversion, fighting for the preservation of human nature that men may have life and have it more abundantly.¹

The aim of this paper will be to show the program of action used by the Communist to attain militant atheism and Soviet power, dictatorship of the proletariat, and the rôle of Catholic Action, in bringing about Christian transformation, which will be the product of Christian heroism, in the words of Jacques Maritain. The paper will confine itself for the most part to activity in the United States alone.

Catholic Action consists not merely of the pursuit of personal Christian perfection, its highest aim, but also of a true apostolate in which Catholics of all social classes participate and gradually become united in thought and action, concentrating on sound doctrine and on increasing legitimate social activity, while being constantly helped and sus-

¹Hoffman, Ross J., *The Restoration*, New York, 1934, p. 10.

tained by the authority of the Bishops. Whereas, Communism "teaches and pursues a twofold aim: merciless class war and complete abolition of private ownership."²

Its body of doctrine lies in the works of Marx, Engel, Lenin; its creed and catechism lies in the *politigramota*, or course of instruction in Communist political and economic ideology; its ecumenical council exists to determine matters of faith and discipline in the congress of the Communist party.³ It emphasizes its world Messianic mission and revolutionary movement, thus nullifying any heretical or dissenting thought or action. The program is to be carried on through concentrated action and biased propaganda. Thus we observe that intellectual liberty does not exist among the Soviets, because of party and State dictation. This may ultimately lead to a "cemetery of intellects, a storehouse of mental coffins."⁴ Also in Russia, those who can, are still living on the "curtain remnants from the Philistine culture of the West."⁵ This indicates an enforced poverty, for the average Russian still has the wants and desires of a normal human being. The voluntary poverty assumed by Catholic Religious and zealous individuals offers a marked contrast; it is a triumphant poverty looking toward man's great destiny; and only the latter can understand these two lines of Louise Imogene Guiney:

O close my hands upon Beatitude,
Not on its toys—⁶

Catholic Action emphasizes individual action, pervaded by "Christian moderation and universal charity" in looking "forward to the complete and much-desired renewal of human society and the Peace of Christ in the Kingdom of Christ."⁷ But the Bolsheviks emphasize the Party Line, about which there is a sad uniformity, and unquestioning conformity to any suggestions or ideas from the higher officials. Yet the Communist party, the revolutionary party of the proletariat leads the struggle of the working class for the construction of Socialism. It is:

²Encyclical Letter, "Forty Years After," N. C. W. C., Washington, 1933, p. 34.

³Chamberlin, W. H., *Russia's Iron Age*, Boston, 1934, p. 18.

⁴Von-Kühnelt-Leddihn, Erik M. R., *The Gates of Hell*, New York, 1933, p. 210.

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 246.

⁶"Deo Optimo Maximo."

⁷"Forty Years After," p. 45.

the vanguard of the working class, and consists of the best, most class-conscious, most active and most courageous members of that class. It incorporates the whole body of the experience of the proletarian struggle. Basing itself upon the revolutionary theory of Marxism, and representing the general and lasting interests of the whole of the working class, the party personifies the unity of proletarian principles, of proletarian will, and of proletarian revolutionary action. It is a revolutionary organization, bound by an iron discipline and strict revolutionary rules of democratic centralism—which can be carried out owing to its loyalty to the revolution, its ability to maintain inseparable ties with the proletarian masses and to its correct political leadership, which is constantly verified and clarified by the experience of the masses themselves.⁸

Now we approach a consideration of the Communist program in the United States. At the eighth convention of the Communist party of the U. S. A., held in Cleveland, April 2-8, 1934, this statement was made:

The United States is most favorable for the establishment of Socialism. Its large-scale concentrated industry and huge proletariat, its accumulated wealth and productive forces, with the enormous supply of raw materials, provide the material basis for a quick change in the life and conditions of the country. If the workers will take power, they will in a very short time radically improve the life of all toilers—industrial workers, farmers, white-collar workers . . . providing a high degree of comfort and well-being for the toiling masses . . . There is no way out of the crisis except by breaking the domination of the rule of the monopolist capitalist class and taking the road pointed out by the Soviet Union as a source of inspiration and encouragement to the oppressed throughout the world.⁹

The Communist party aims to destroy capitalism, to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat, to abolish classes, and to reconstruct human life on the basis of Communism. It gives political training in Marxism-Leninism to the advanced and militant workers. The party watches tirelessly every economic, political, social, or cultural event or trend, always pointing out to the worker what must be done to achieve the overthrow of capitalism. This plan of struggle for the working class is called the Party Line.

Aside from this every Communist must be active in any organization to which he belongs and in any place where he works. The group or Communist nucleus must be established in the factory or the mine, in unions or fraternal

⁸*The Communist Party*, New York, 1934, p. 3.

⁹*The Way Out: A Program for American Labor*, New York, 1934, p. 13.

organizations. The nucleus discusses existing problems, instructs its members to act in the best interests of the working class.

A party nucleus holds its meetings every week, and the key problem is promoting an organization against the employer. Each member of the nucleus is in touch with other workers who are constantly distributing pamphlets and leaflets. In certain instances they have to publish a workers' paper to expose the shop and to organize for the struggle, while the matter is kept a secret from the owners and any informants. Frequently they will invite nonparty men to join in the conspiracy thereby gaining the confidence of the workers. The party will grow and finally they will attempt to lead an open struggle against the employer or the State. Then the Communists will organize a strike committee and also an Unemployed Council. The men who become mass leaders in the ensuing strike are those who perform outstanding work in the struggle.

If not members of shop councils then the Communists organize locally in the place of residence, into a street nucleus, which consists of the Communists in the same neighborhood, ten to thirty, no more. When a street nucleus becomes too large, part of it is organized into a second, and given jurisdiction in another territory.

If there is a shop in the district the nucleus arranges open-air meetings in front of the shop at closing time, and the interested workers listen and receive pamphlets. This practice continues until a contact is made. The group of created sympathetic inside workers makes the task of organization easier. The nucleus also concentrates on unemployment. It makes a canvass of all the unemployed in the territory, organizes from among them an Unemployed Council, fights with it for unemployment relief; if it is essential the street nucleus calls a demonstration in front of the local relief bureau insisting on aid. It also fights against the eviction of the unemployed, fights for free gas and electricity for the unemployed, fights for the release of imprisoned local workers. It assists strikers' pickets and local demonstrations against the oppression of the Negro in the neighborhood.

The shop and street nuclei distribute Communist papers, magazines, and pamphlets. They induce workers to read

so that after reading about the class struggle and recognizing that it really exists from a subjective point of view the worker is eager to participate in the revolutionary struggle.

There are also Party Fractions. The Communists belonging to any organization form a special fraction which discusses the problems of its organization and makes decisions for its members. The Party Fraction advocates militancy and strives to transform the whole organization into a real fighting unit.

Since Communist activity requires training, every party nucleus is a training school giving theoretical classes to members and conducting discussions on current questions. The capable militant members are sent to special training schools. Unity and cohesion is the struggle of these organizations. Difficulties and problems are carefully discussed and the decision finally made is binding on all the members. The whole formation of the party is built on the basis of this democratic centralism, that is, every member is entitled to a vote and all are free to criticize the activities of the organization, but at the same time they must follow the central plan and bow to the rulings of the leaders.

Now to review the organization of the party: The Communist International has as its motto, "Workers of the World Unite." A delegate from each Communist Party attends every few years an International Communist Congress meeting for two or three weeks. The experiences of a world-wide struggle are shared and others mapped out. The Congress elects an executive committee which is the governing body and this body's rule is supreme. This committee and the Presidium conduct the affairs of the Communist International (Comintern) from Moscow because this is the "capital of the only workers' and peasants' government in the world, and the Comintern can meet there freely." The Communist party of the United States is part of the world organization. Mr. Olgin says: "The workers of the U. S. A. will proceed from struggle to struggle, from victory to victory, until, rising in a revolution, they will crush the capitalist State, establish a Soviet State, abolish the cruel and bloody system of capitalism and proceed to the upbuilding of Socialism."¹⁰

¹⁰Olgin, M. J., *Why Communism?*, New York, 1933, p. 96. The outline of Communist action has been readapted from *The Communist Party*, New York, 1934, and *Why Communism?*, pp. 84-96.

At the head of the party is the central committee elected at the party convention. In the districts are district committees elected at district conventions. (The country is divided into twenty districts.) Each district is divided into sections and each section comprises a number of units as the shop and street nuclei. Under the district and section committees are the various fractions. They discuss in each meeting what each member has to do in the next few days. To give an example: One will confront a boss with a worker's demand; a second will lead a group of unemployed workers to the home relief bureau to demand relief for those discriminated against; a third will participate in the picket line; a fourth will put back into an apartment the furniture removed from the evicted home; a fifth will cautiously speak to a group of marine workers trying to affiliate them with the marine workers' industrial union; a sixth will speak to a group of workers engaged in an ammunition plant trying to make them understand the necessity of organizing in order to be ready to stop work in case of war; a seventh will distribute leaflets calling for demonstration to protest about the United States and Cuba; an eighth will be leading the miners in a strike; a ninth will be speaking in favor of a local Communist candidate; and the tenth will be showing the workers a Soviet film.¹¹

Under the party's guidance is the Young Communist International. In this country the Young Communist League numbers six thousand and has increased its shop nuclei to fifty-six.¹² It participates in strikes; gives leadership to revolts in the C. C. C. camps; conducts struggles for Negro rights; and urges protection against war and Fascism.

Their program according to the Manifesto and Resolutions of the Seventh National Convention is: (1) a broadening of the united front against the Roosevelt program of war and Fascism, and winning youth for the defense of the Soviet Union and the Chinese Soviet Republic; (2) making the shop a revolutionary fortress; (3) working in the trade unions and training youth for the revolutionary trade unions, especially among marine workers, steel employees and packing men; (4) striving for unemployment insurance;

¹¹*Why Communism?*, p. 94.

¹²*A Program for American Youth: Manifesto and Resolutions of Seventh National Convention, Young Communist League of U. S. A. (June 22-27, 1934)*, p. 13

(5) rebelling against forced labor, the work demanded of the "forest legion" of the C. C. C. by the Government (they fear the C. C. C. may transform American youth into storm troops); (6) fighting for Negro rights; (7) working among the farm youth and winning the boys in the "Y's" and the settlement houses for the revolutionary class struggle; and, (8) sanctioning a mass children's movement.¹³

The above follows closely Lenin's teaching relative to revolutionary education, namely, that all knowledge of Communism from Communism pamphlets and publications is absolutely worthless without work and struggle; and that the Youth League must be an independent organization in order to cast fear into the opportunists.¹⁴

The Young Communist League manifests great interest in the Pioneers, an organization for workers' and poor farmers' boys and girls. In the United States, the central agency, the National Pioneer Council, is in New York, including a representative from each parent organization. Activities are recommended to the Pioneer districts and they in turn transmit the information to the troops, to endeavor to fulfill the directions as well as possible. The Pioneer password is, "Always ready." The Pioneer pledge states, "I stand ready for the cause of the working class in its struggle for freedom and pledge to observe the Pioneer (or the International Workers' Order or The Young Defenders) rule at all times."¹⁵ The official organ of this group in the United States is the *New Pioneer*.

A comic strip which occurred on the back cover of the *New Pioneer* for January, 1935, is worth noting, namely, Jack Herman's "Comrade Kids." The landlord on entering a tenant's home announces, "Pay your rent or get out." When the tenant fails to comply, an eviction notice is secured, and the landlord warns, "Have 'em thrown out and treat 'em rough." The apprehensive young Pioneers stand around the home of the poor worker and brag, "We'll see that they don't get evicted." The group go down to the corner of Liberty and Easy Streets, and shift the signs on the post; then they advance to the home bearing the number

¹³*Ibid.*, pp. 15-22.

¹⁴*The Fifteenth Anniversary of the Young Communist International* in "The Communist International," January 5, 1935, p. 27.

¹⁵Campion, Martha, *Who Are the Young Pioneers?*, New York, 1934, pp. 27, 28.

92 and change it to 60; finally returning to 60 and replacing it with 92. The evictors come and ask the children the location of 92 Liberty Street, and the wily youngsters send them to the landlord's home. The latter, astounded when the movers arrive at his place pleads that he is the landlord, but all he hears is, "Nuts. Let him have it boys." Bang! Crash! "Our orders was to treat 'em rough." So we see the landlord wounded and bruised in the midst of a chaotic room.

The Pioneer Song Book is equally interesting, since it shows the distorted and twisted notions that are being inculcated in American children's minds. We will quote a few of their rhymes:

HUNGER CHILDREN

Empty is the cupboard, no pillow for the head,
We are the hunger children, who fight for milk and bread.
We are the workers' children, who must be fed. Cheer!

ALWAYS READY

Pioneers we're always ready, ready for the workers' need.
Staunch as steel and standing steady, Pioneers we're in the lead!
In the lead, the wide world over, in the lead to show the way.
We will bring the red October as we sing our song of May.

THE BUILDERS

We are the builders.
We build the future.
The future world lies in our hands.
We swing our hammers.
We use our weapons against our foes.
In every land. In every land.

Mother Goose on the Bread Line, Sing a Song of Six Per Cent.

Sing a song of six per cent, ten per cent and more.
That's where all my labor went, whom was I working for.
I worked for the Queen in the parlor—the King in the counting house.
The King was counting the dollars to clothe his lazy spouse.
My wife was worn with worry so the Queen could have no woe.
The King said, "Hurry, hurry, why do you loiter so?"
I labored and toiled without ceasing.
Never I groaned or complained but the reign of pain was increasing,
And it always poured when it rained and after these years of devotion

I was thrown away on the heap. "You waste," they said, "too much motion
And after all labor is cheap." So sing a song of profits, starving
workers die, nine and fifty rich men, they have all the pie.

Some day when set before them with many a groan and cry
They'll find a hammer and sickle is carved on every pie the same as
did Czar Nicolai.

How could the old guy sing, but wasn't that a dandy dish to set
before a king?

So sing a song of six per cent, ten per cent and more . . .

TOM-TOM

Tom-Tom, the striker's son, saw his Dad shot down by a gun,
When Tom-Tom grew up tall, he was the bravest striker of them all.¹⁶

In Russia the Young Pioneers is an organization for children between the ages of eight and sixteen, and they are distinguished by red scarfs. In Russia they march out to camps in summer where they are given courses in physical training, woodcraft and other Boy Scout practices. At "Christmas time the Young Pioneers are armed with little primers containing smatterings of Marxian comparative religion, mythology and other information inimical to the Christmas tree." In the Soviet election the troops of the Y. P. march in line and announce instructions to the Soviet delegates. They also read the *Pioneer Pravda* containing the latest measures of the agrarian policy and legends circulated in capitalistic countries.¹⁷

We must also consider Communist propaganda in the United States. Litvinoff once made this statement to President Roosevelt: "The Soviet Government undertakes not to permit the formation or residence on its territory of any organization or group, and to prevent activity on its territory of any organization or group, or of representatives or officials or any organization or group which has an aim to overthrow or preparation for overthrow of, or bringing about by force a change in, political or social order of the whole or part of the United States, its Territories or possessions." This statement obligated the Soviet Government to suppress or expel the Communist International which was working for the overthrow of the United States, but we understand that a Congress of the International was

¹⁶Potamkin, Harry Alan, *Pioneer Song Book*, New York, 1933, pp. 4-30.

¹⁷*Russia's Iron Age*, p. 233.

held in Moscow in 1934. What was this promise worth? Senator Barbour said on January 23rd (quoted in the New York *Sun*) that the insidious propaganda of the Communists has not only permeated the industrial field but the military establishments of the United States as well. "It is a fact well recognized by the command of the Army and Navy that Communists are actively engaged at the present time in attempting from within to destroy the morale of our armed forces."

Recently leaders in the Communist movement were urged to convert the prevailing discontent relative to the NRA into a gigantic struggle of the proletariat of the United States.

One of their leading propaganda organs is the daily paper, in New York, *The Daily Worker*. Volunteer Communists sell it on the street. Copies of back issues are delivered in the neighborhood whether they are wanted or not in order to arouse interest in the class struggle.

The Communists try through devious means to win the Negro in the South. At the Sixth World Congress of the Communist International held at Moscow in 1928, a resolution was drafted upon this question, dictating their theoretical position and the tactics to be used in this country. The "self-determination" of the Black Belt was essential. First of all the Negro peasantry were to be organized. "Cadres" of militant, urban Negroes were trained to organize the "peasants." The result of such action may be an outbreak comparable to the memorable one near Camp Hill, Tallapoosa, Ala.

We all realize that the Communist party will continue to struggle against the "left" and right opportunism, as well as against conciliation toward opportunist deviations. This struggle on two fronts is the law of the development of Bolshevism.¹⁸

The Communists also promote an anti-religious program of action which states in part:

The Communist party of the Soviet Union is guided by the conviction that only conscious and deliberate planning of all the social and economic activities of the masses will cause religious prejudice to die out. The party strives for the complete dissolution of the ties between the exploiting classes and the organizations of religious propaganda, facilitates the real emancipation of the working masses from

¹⁸*The Communist Party*, p. 39.

religious prejudices and organizes the widest possible scientific, educational and anti-religious propaganda.¹⁹

The League of Militant Atheists fights religion because it is a counter-revolutionary force, an ally and a weapon of the bourgeoisie in its struggle against the movement. The League follows Lenin's advice to utilize every method available to stimulate men to criticize religion themselves. At the present writing the League is not satisfied with the work accomplished, for which we are immensely grateful.

For a moment we will consider the religious problem in Russia and be grateful that it has not conquered the United States. Before the War there were 50,000 churches; now there are approximately 38,000. Moscow had 600 churches before the War and now it has 100. The priest and ministers are classified with the insane, insofar as they are disenfranchized and deprived of certain rights. Until 1929 there was a type of religious freedom, and anti-religious propaganda was recognized under Article IV; now religious Faiths have the right of existence. (But can they really exist and function as institutions?) The test of physical and mental courage is to be religious in Russia. One of their leading techniques in the field of propaganda is the anti-religious museum, as St. Isaac's Cathedral in Leningrad, which is a combination of the traditional background of bas-reliefs, paintings, and anti-religious propaganda. Above a collection of religious books in Old Slavonic is a text from Lenin to the effect that the purpose of religion is to "justify exploitation and to give a reduced price ticket to heaven."²⁰

A second technique is the combination of atheistic slogans and suggestive pictorial representations. For example, all face cards in certain card packs cast disrepute on some Faith: Hearts, the Roman Catholic priest; Diamonds, the Jewish rite; Spades, the Orthodox rite; Clubs, the Oriental medicine man and a Buddhist figure; the Joker depicts the Deity as a capitalist in evening clothes holding the reins which control the four religions. The back of the cards show Me-phistopheles carrying away the souls of the damned.²¹

Even the children's A B C blocks are affected. B, for instance shows a red broom sweeping out the Bible and the

¹⁹Yaroslavsky, E., *Religion in the U.S.S.R.*, New York, 1934, p. 5.

²⁰*Russia's Iron Age*, p. 313.

²¹*Ibid.*, p. 318.

icons, with the following appeal imprinted on the block: "Give up your brother's fear of God."²²

There is also an attempt in Russia to destroy all semblance of Christmas. Trees are not to be sold; it is interesting to read that trees were sold last year after December 23rd in certain stores. This pertinent statement is found in the Library of the Young Atheists: "The struggle against the Christmas tree is a struggle against religion and class enemies. Behind the back of Uncle Frost hide the priest and the kulak."²³ Shall we bend every effort to keep this spirit and attitude out the United States?

How can we answer the program of Red Russia? We respond, with Catholic Action. But is Catholic Action active enough? Father Gillis aptly wrote in the August *Catholic World*, "The day of the big game has arrived and it is not an indoor game; it is not a game but a battle, and battles are fought not in barracks but on land and sea and in the air. We've got to get out there where the atheists are. If we don't they'll come in where we are."

Catholics today must be alive not only as individuals but as members of the Church, which is a living union of the Faithful under and with their Bishops. The Catholics are part of this living union and consequently have a real duty. Pope Pius XI in his letter to the Cardinal Patriarch of Lisbon stated: "As every Christian receives the supernatural life which circulates in the veins of the Mystical Body of Christ, that abundant life that Christ said He came to bring on earth, so we must transfuse it into others who either do not possess it or possess it too sparsely and more in appearance than in reality."²⁴

Catholic Action unlike Communist Action has a spiritual end, the salvation of man. Also the former respects the dignity of man, the natural law, and societal institutions; and urges manifestations of love, justice, charity, and equity among men. It procures the real saving of souls through "diffusing the kingdom of Our Lord in individuals, families, and society," and uniting "under its banner of peace, in perfect and disciplined harmony, all those Faithful who intend

²²*Ibid.*, p. 318.

²³*Ibid.*, p. 318.

²⁴*Holy Father Reviews Aims of Catholic Action*, "Catholic Action," May, 1934, p. 7.

to bring their contribution to so holy and so vast a work of the apostolate.²⁵

Again Catholic Action presupposes the fidelity of the Catholics to those means of

personal sanctification and those evidences of public worship without which there can be no Christian life at all. First of all, the Catholic will be not only faithful to, he will diligently cultivate the spirit and practice of prayer; attendance at Holy Mass; the frequent reception of the Sacraments; particularly the life-giving Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, and that liturgical life of the Church which manifests the mysteries of Christ's life whereby we both watch and are able to imitate Him.²⁶

To consider the organization of Catholic Action: it is a central, motivating force which has been organized in conformity with the regulations laid down by the Pope and it is directly or indirectly dependent on the hierarchy. Around this revolve the auxiliary organizations in the Church which are affecting this movement.

The National Council of Catholic Women maintain the National Catholic Social Service School and its students should be valuable crusaders in promoting social justice. The National Council of Catholic Men provide a radio program on Sundays, bringing to the radio public outstanding priests and it is almost impossible to measure the good performed by that organization in this respect. The National Catholic Welfare Conference, the America Press, the Paulist Press, and others all contribute in disseminating timely pamphlets. The Catholic Press through its papers and magazines, as *America*, *The Catholic World*, *The Commonwealth* and *The Queen's Work* present valuable material.

The adult education programs carried on by three Catholic institutions should aid in the struggle against false doctrines and thought. They are: St. Charles Seminary, Columbus, Ohio; Rosary College, River Forest, Ill.; and Fenwick High School, Oak Park, Ill.

The Catholic youth organizations have done outstanding work in interesting youth in healthy activities. And where there is a healthy atmosphere of thought and way of living, Communism is not welcomed with outstretched hands. The

²⁵*Ibid.*, p. 7.

²⁶Cicognani, Rev. Amleto G., *Requisites of Catholic Action*, "Catholic Action," July, 1934, p. 7.

Sodalities are urging action but again not much has been accomplished.

In New York the Trinity League has been formed to combat atheism and its method lies in discussion classes, conducted by the Paulist Fathers. The League hopes to establish a general medium of opposition to the spread of atheism through the press and the radio. Consequently it has started a press clipping bureau and is inaugurating a radio program to set forth the Catholic position and to refute the incorrect statements published in secular papers and magazines relative to Catholicism.

In Brooklyn, the Labor Guild has been active. Near Union Square in New York a Catholic Worker's School has been established. From the same headquarters is published the admirable paper, *The Catholic Worker*, under the able leadership of Dorothy Day and Dorothy Weston. Its circulation is over 65,000, and we earnestly wish that it could be increased to 100,000 and above. This paper, which opposes Communism and urges social justice, costs only twenty-five cents a year. Its offices and school are at 114 Charles Street.

Catholics boast of the glorious past of the Church, the early Christians who loved one another, the ages of Faith when men followed the Sermon on the Mount and practiced the corporal works of mercy and reared an enviable civilization. But that is in the past. A new Christendom or a new pagandom is ahead. Instead of being lethargic, action, organization and individual responsibility, all are needed. Our accomplishments in the years since Communism has expanded have been slight, but we feel that certain of these small undertakings will lead to larger movements and thinking individuals will follow Catholicism and not Communism. To carry this out, faith and sincerity, sympathy and understanding, honesty and intelligence are first requisites, and second, concrete, constructive action, and third, following the triple emblem: Prayer, Action, Sacrifice.

What can be done? First of all—act. The apostle of the working man must be the working man himself. We must also use the great resources of Catholic training by instructing youth, by founding Catholic associations, by social congresses, by having sound publications and by study groups. *The Catholic Worker* in a recent paper suggested

that trade guilds be formed to combat the Communist, Socialist and bourgeois already in existence; that no Catholic trade union existed in the United States; that workers' colleges be established throughout the country; that Communist and bourgeois propaganda be eliminated from textbooks in our schools; that farming communes be established where Catholic thought might flourish; and that the medieval hospices be maintained throughout the cities. Meanwhile needy Catholics must be given food, clothing and shelter, because St. Thomas said that for the practice of virtue, a certain amount of goods was indispensable.

"Quadragesimo Anno" is the guide in Catholic Action. The Church

goes forward to meet the multitude of the humblest workers with special solicitude; and not only so that these may enjoy those benefits to which they have a right according to justice and equity, but still more so that they may be taken from the insidious and pernicious influence of Communism, which, with diabolical perfidy, endeavors to stifle the light of religion in the world and expose the workers to the sure danger of falling again, in a more or less distant day, into the same state of abjectness from which they have been laboriously raised.²⁷

We may summarize by saying that religion alone can destroy the evil at its roots. Catholic Action can subdue and forever destroy Soviet power, dictatorship of the proletariat, and reconstruct the social order through Christ the King if we begin to act immediately.

²⁷Holy Father Reviews Aims of Catholic Action, p. 8.

Communism in Mexico

What It Is and What Is Behind It

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PART I. OBJECTIVES OF MEXICAN COMMUNISM

IN surveying the activities of Communists it is necessary to keep in mind a certain definite point of view which will help us to perceive the unity in all their divergent and often confusing actions and which will help us to detect just what is Communist propaganda. For it often appears to be the opposite of what it is. . . . Such a point of view is expressed very well in the Exercises of St. Ignatius in the meditation on Two Standards, that of Jesus Christ and that of Lucifer. These present two opposing ideals ever in conflict and the final victory though not in doubt, will not come until the end. Communism presents the ideals of Lucifer—material riches, material honors, material pleasures, and all the good it promises comes under the head of material and physical satisfactions. I am not saying, however, that every individual Communist understands that these are the ideals of Lucifer and so chooses him, for quite often individuals take up Communist activities from a really noble motive to lift man out of miserable conditions. The concentration on the physical aspect of these conditions eventually prevents him from distinguishing between the abuse of a thing and the thing itself and thus blinds him to the destructive character of the remedy proposed. All of us can easily fall into the same error unless we criticize constantly the objectives and methods of Communism in the light of the standards of Christ.

According to Communist writings, teachings and actions, the great objective of Communism is to detach man from God and to make him self-sufficient, interested in material

satisfactions. In short, to de-supernaturalize him. The Communist problem of how to achieve this aim varies with the particularly society and the actual conditions. . . . Usually it is a case of putting over the ideas that:

1. Man is purely a natural being. Therefore everything in accordance with nature and natural functions is to be followed.

2. The institutions of society must be secularized, that is, disconnected from everything that savors of religion and which emphasizes the supernatural and man's relation to God.

Hence the propaganda must be directed:

1. To secure an educational system based on the idea that man is a purely natural being.

2. To supersede the corporate social institutions such as the family, the State and the Church. These are based upon integrated and universal relationships which are natural to man in the sense of being in accord with his nature but which are not natural in the sense of being purely material or perhaps material and intellectual but never spiritual. For these institutions the Communist wishes to substitute the group which is a mere aggregation of human beings united for *action in common* to satisfy a particular interest. It is from this last idea—action in common—that this propaganda gets its popular name, Communism.

These are not new ideas; in fact, they are quite old but are never found developed in any highly civilized societies and are never really popular in the sense of being supported by the majority in a civilization. Communism flourishes best in a decadent, dying or weary society, but it crops up every few generations as an antimovement, according to the health of the society in which it operates. It is always unimportant and quiescent in a Catholic social order where the social institutions are so firmly established that man is not at a loose end and so easily to be detached. Nevertheless it is never entirely absent even in a Catholic society, for the reason given by St. Ignatius. The world is the theater of the tremendous drama of the free will of man and therefore even in a Catholic society, we observe the Communist phenomenon rising to the surface and taking on a new life. Today Communism is intensely active in Russia and Hispanic America, particularly in Mexico, but such intense activity is

not the product of one generation. So far as Hispanic America is concerned, this present Communism is a growth of about two hundred years and has come to its climax since the turn of the twentieth century. Looking back, we can trace and mark each step of the way . . . which is the classic way of all Communist activity.

I have said that the problem was to implant an idea—to detach man from God and the acknowledgment of his relationship to God, and also to detach him from his social institutions which have the function of fostering this relationship. The best method of securing this is to destroy the institution if possible, if not, to weaken it and to substitute for the active life of the institution the life of the group. Hence we must notice that there will be an attack on the institution and a parallel propaganda for the substitute, the group. We might note in this connection how much American sociological thought is preoccupied with the group. In fact Sorokin in a study recently made of trends in modern sociology calls attention to this preoccupation and does not hesitate to say that sociology in the United States is the study of the group or it is nothing.

Now the institutions most characteristic of the nature of man are the family, from which he takes his life, the State, from which he receives his protection, the institutions connected with private property from which he receives his support, and the institution of the Church which cherishes his soul and through which he receives his final explanation and destiny. All these institutions are socially so closely interconnected and psychologically so integrated that their interpenetrations can only be explained by an analogy of the interpenetration of the spiritual, the intellectual and the physical in the nature of man. To attack one is to attack all, and this is just what the Communist does. But there is a certain order in which these are arranged in a Catholic society and the Communist makes his attack on the institutions as a rule in this order.

At the head of society are the twin institutions of the Church and the State, coöperating in their special fields but not united. Then come the institutions of private property and the family. This is the traditional organization according to the natural law, found in all societies which pretend to civilization, but only to be found perfected since the

revelations of the Catholic religion and Church established by Christ and where this religion is sincerely practiced by the majority.

The Communist propaganda aims to destroy the relation between Church and State. First, by weakening the respect for religion and in Catholic societies by raising the doubt, Is the Church, the true Church, or is it possible to know truth at all?

Secondly, the organization of the Church is attacked by destroying the sub-institutions, the Religious orders, the charitable endowments, confraternities, schools, etc. This so circumscribes the activity of the Church that it can hardly be said to exist at all, and therefore may be disregarded if not ignored.

Thirdly, to attack the existing institutions of private property by crippling them or destroying them entirely.

Fourthly, to attack the curriculum of the school, philosophy, languages, religion courses, anything that is a medium for preserving traditions.

Fifthly, to attack the political institutions.

Sixthly, to attack the solidarity of the family unity.

Today we find the emphasis most strongly placed on the schools and the family because the other institutions are considered by the Communists to be so definitely weakened that they have little influence.

The technique of carrying out these objectives will vary with the psychology of the people and according to the degree of stability these organizations may have. It will be both indirect and direct: indirect by a propaganda through the press, lectures, the arts, aiming always to establish the view that man has no supernatural interests or possibilities, and to confuse the people; direct, by abolishing the institution in a frontal attack. All of this activity is presented first so as not to alarm the people, and thus to arouse their effective opposition. So it starts out by stressing real abuses if these exist; if not they manufacture or exaggerate them. The same vocabulary of the victims and opponents is used, but with a changed meaning not at first apparent. It upholds the same ends. Sometimes it even has the boldness to take over the very program. It claims only to destroy abuses and to build on reforms. It wins over the unthinking by the vocabulary, the sincere by stressing abuses, especially

very patent abuses while ignoring or minimizing the good achievements.

The history of Hispanic America gives us the most complete picture of how all this was done and the attempt made to destroy the Catholic social order. Mexico and Peru where the most orderly societies, and the most Catholic, were established suffered this attack in the most bitter form, though all the Spanish possessions were affected. Mexico, because of accidental circumstances such as climate, resources, nearness to world trade routes, and the character of the Indians, was the most successful and the most Catholic of all the centers and where the ruin is now the most complete. This process can best be studied in Mexico, where a Catholic social order had been firmly established.

(The second part of this Address: "What Happened in Mexico," will be published in the issue of THE CATHOLIC MIND for April 22.)